

CLAIMS

I Claim:

1. A telecommunication system for transmitting medical compliance reminders, the telecommunication system comprising:

a prepaid telecommunication access card;

a patient reminder profile that is activated by the prepaid telecommunication access card; and,

a medical compliance reminder system that transmits a plurality of medical compliance reminders to the patient in accordance with the patient reminder profile; whereby a patient obtains the prepaid telecommunication card and receives a plurality of medical compliance reminders that are transmitted by the medical compliance reminder system using the patient reminder profile.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein the patient reminder profile further comprises:

the patient's name; and,

the patient's contact information.

3. The system of claim 1, wherein the patient reminder profile further comprises a number of medical compliance reminders to make.

4. The system of claim 1, wherein the patient reminder profile further comprises a sequence of dates and times corresponding to each medical compliance reminder.

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5. The system of claim 1, wherein one reminder transmission combines reminders for multiple medicines if the multiple medicines can be taken simultaneously.
6. The system of claim 1, further comprising an interface for configuration of the patient reminder profile.
7. The system of claim 6, where the interface for configuration of the patient reminder profile is an interactive World Wide Web form.
8. The system of claim 6, where the interface for configuration of the patient reminder profile is an interactive touch tone telephone system interface.
9. The system of claim 6, where the interface for configuration of the patient reminder profile is an interactive voice response system.
10. The system of claim 1, further comprising confirmation of patient reminder profile configuration information.
11. The system of claim 1, wherein the patient reminder profile comprises at least one of:
 - a language selection;
 - a list of at least one patient contact points;

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a list of at least one patient contact telephone numbers;

a sequence of patient contacts to try until a response is received indicating the presence of the patient;

a sequence of patient contacts to try until an answering machine is obtained;

a selection indicating whether an answering machine message should be left;

at least one alternate patient contact sequence for time periods;

at least one different reminder preference for different time periods;

at least one custom message left by the patient;

at least one custom message left by a third party, such as a loved one;

at least one custom message selected from a list of prerecorded voices;

an option indicating whether usage instructions should be included with the reminders;

a set of instructions to be included as to the use of the medicine;

a set of instructions to be included as to how the patient should handle missed doses;

a selection indicating whether the system should ask for the patient before reminding the patient whether they have taken the medicine;

a selection indicating whether to wait for the patient to take the medicine before hanging up;

a selection indicating whether to remind the patient to order a refill when the medicine is running low;

a selection indicating whether the patient should be asked about specific side effects, and if so, how often;

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a selection indicating whether to contact an administrator in situations when a patient cannot be reached;

a selection indicating whether to contact an administrator in situations when a patient has discontinued the medication;

a selection indicating whether to contact an administrator in situations when a patient needs a prescription refill; and,

a selection indicating whether to contact an administrator in situations when a patient needs to add more money to the prepaid telecommunication access card.

12. The system of claim 1, wherein the administrator profile comprises at least one of:
 - at least one administrator phone number;
 - at least one administrator beeper contact number;
 - at least one administrator personal digital assistant (PDA) contact address;
 - at least one administrator instant message account;
 - at least one administrator email address; and,
 - at least one administrator fax number.

13. The system of claim 1, further comprising a report summarizing patient reminders and responses.

14. A method for using a prepaid telecommunication access card to transmit at least one medical compliance reminders, the method comprising the steps of:

obtaining a prepaid telecommunication access card;

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activating a medical compliance reminder system with the prepaid telecommunication access card;

storing patient profile information accessible to the medical compliance reminder system; and,

transmitting a plurality of medical compliance reminder messages using the patient profile information;

whereby a patient obtains the prepaid telecommunication access card, activates the medical compliance reminder system with the prepaid telecommunication access card, stores patient profile information accessible to the medical compliance reminder system, and initiates the medical compliance reminder system to transmit a plurality of reminder messages to the patient using the patient profile information.

15. The method of claim 14, further comprising the steps of:

asking whether the patient took the medicine; and,

obtaining a patient acknowledgement response to the medical reminder message.

16. The method of claim 14, further comprising the steps of:

obtaining the patient's name;

obtaining patient contact information; and,

storing the patient's name and contact information.

17. The method of claim 14, further comprising the step of configuring patient profile information to include a number of medical compliance reminders to transmit.

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18. The method of claim 14, further comprising the step of configuring the patient profile information to include a sequence of dates and times for each medical compliance reminder.

19. The method of claim 14, further comprising the step of combining multiple message transmissions for multiple medicines so that one reminder message is transmitted if two or more medicines can be taken simultaneously.

20. The method of claim 14, further comprising at least one of the steps of:

- obtaining a language selection;
- obtaining a sequence of patient contacts to try until a response is received indicating the presence of the patient;
- obtaining a sequence of patient contacts to try until a response is received indicating an answering machine;
- obtaining a list of at least one patient contact point;
- obtaining at least one alternate patient contact sequence for different days of the week, times of day, special days, and combinations thereof;
- obtaining at least one different patient profile preference for different days of the week, times of day; special days, and combinations thereof.;
- obtaining at least one custom message from the patient;
- obtaining at least one custom message from a third party, such as a loved one;
- selecting at least one custom message from a list of prerecorded voices;

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obtaining selection information indicating whether usage instructions should be transmitted with some or all of the reminders;

obtaining selection information indicating instructions to be transmitted as to the use of the medicine;

obtaining selection information indicating instructions to be read as to how the patient should handle missed doses;

obtaining selection information indicating whether an answering machine message should be left;

obtaining a selection indicating whether the system should ask for the patient before asking whether they have taken the medicine;

obtaining a selection indicating whether to wait for the patient to take the medicine before hanging up;

obtaining a selection indicating whether to remind the customer to order a refill when the medicine is running out;

obtaining a selection indicating whether the patient should be asked about specific side effects; and,

obtaining a selection indicating whether to contact an administrator in situations when a patient cannot be reached;

obtaining a selection indicating whether to contact an administrator in situations when a patient has discontinued the medication;

obtaining a selection indicating whether to contact an administrator in situations when a patient needs a prescription refill; and,

obtaining a selection indicating whether to contact an administrator in situations

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when a patient needs to add more money to the prepaid reminder account.

21. The method of claim 14, further comprising generating and transmitting confirmation of patient reminder profile configuration information.

22. The method of claim 14, further comprising at least one of the steps of:

obtaining at least one administrator phone number;

obtaining at least one administrator beeper contact number;

obtaining at least one administrator PDA contact address;

obtaining at least one administrator Instant Message account;

obtaining at least one administrator email address; and,

obtaining at least one administrator fax number.

23. The method of claim 14, further comprising the step of generating a report summarizing patient reminders and responses.

24. The method of claim 14, further comprising interaction scenarios comprising at least one of the steps of:

leaving a message if the patient cannot be reached;

generating a message that asks the patient to press a specified key at the phone;

generating a message that asks the patient to come to the phone and say a specified phrase;

generating a message that asks the patient to come to the phone and press a

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specified key, and if the patient is not there asking the person who answers to press a key;

generating a message that asks the patient to come to the phone and say a specified phrase, and if the patient is not there asking the person who answers to say a specified phrase;

splicing a recording of the patients name the message at the points where the name should be read;

trying the next patient contact number if an answering machine picks up and the patient has specified that other contact methods should be tried;

trying the next contact method if the person who responds indicates that the patient is not there;

waiting a preset interval and then trying again, and giving up after a number of unsuccessful attempts;

contacting the administrator, doctor, relative, or other third party to notify them that the patient could not be reached; and,

contacting an administrator, doctor, relative, or other third party if the patient is unreachable for a few consecutive reminders;

25. The method of claim 14, further comprising the step of playing a name of the patient's medicine from at least one of: (a) a recording that an administrator had made with text-to-speech of the medicine name, and (b) a pre-recorded message that corresponds with the medicine name, where the pre-recorded message is selected from a plurality of pre-recorded messages for a number of common medicines

26. The method of claim 14, further comprising the steps of:

prompting to the patient to press a first key on the telephone when their medicine has been taken;

prompting to the patient to press a second key on the telephone if to be reminded again after a predetermined time;

prompting to the patient to press a third key on the telephone if to be reminded again at a different time;

prompting to the patient to press a fourth key on the telephone if there are concerns about taking the medicine; or,

prompting to the patient to press a fifth key on the telephone if they have discontinued the use of the medicine;

transmitting a congratulatory message if the patient indicates the medicine has been taken; and,

recording the transaction to a database.

27. The method of claim 14, further comprising a user interaction scenario comprising:

asking if the patient wants to be reminded again in an unspecified interval; and,

asking for input regarding when to try back, marking a deferred transaction in response thereto to a database, and repeating the reminder at the specified time.

28. The method of claim 14, further comprising the steps of asking questions if the patient has concerns about taking the medicine, the questions comprising:

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asking if the patient would like to hear a list of potential side effects, if so,
transmitting a list of the potential side effects and possible remedies therefor;

asking if the patient believes they may have at least one symptoms, if so, ,
advising the patient to take at least one of the following actions:

discontinuing use of the medicine immediately;
contacting a physician or pharmacist immediately for further instructions;
contacting a poison control center, hospital, emergency center, or doctor
for further instructions; and,
bridging the call directly to a poison control center, hospital, emergency
center, or doctor, with a subset of the patient profile information.

29. The method of claim 28, further comprising the step of contacting an
administrator, pharmacy, pharmaceutical company, or doctor to alert them to a potential
side effect.

30. The method of claim 14, further comprising at least one of the steps of:
asking if the patient would like to discontinue the reminder phone calls;
asking if the patient would like another call after a specified time interval;
contacting the patient after a specified time interval to ask whether to discontinue
the reminder phone calls;
asking whether to continue the reminders;
asking if the patient wants more time to determine whether to discontinue the
calls;

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asking for the time interval;

calling back at a specified time to present the discontinuation question again, and asking whether more time is needed to make that decision;

asking if the patient wants to discontinue use and registering an affirmative response to the database to cancel future reminders for this medicine;

asking if the patient wants to discontinue use and registering an affirmative response to the database to cancel future reminders for this medicine, and contacting the administrator to report this event;

transmitting a message if the patient has discontinued use of the medicine conveying the danger of not completing a prescription course unless on the advice of a doctor and suggesting that the patient contact a doctor, registering the transaction to a database, and canceling future reminders for this medicine;

transmitting a message if the patient has discontinued use of the medicine conveying the danger of not completing a prescription course unless on the advice of a doctor and suggesting that the patient contact a doctor, registering the transaction to a database, and canceling future reminders for this medicine, and contacting the administrator to report this event;

asking whether the patient would like to discuss their decision with a doctor;

asking whether the patient would like the call to be bridged to a doctor;

asking whether the patient wants to receive a callback at a different time to confirm that they have chosen to discontinue use of the medicine, and if affirmative, recording the time interval for the callback; and,

recording this transaction to the patient profile information database and

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scheduling the deferred reminder.

31. The method of claim 14, where the prepaid telecommunication access card is activated by at least one of the steps of:

- activating the card in the store;
- activating the card on the web;
- activating the card over the phone;
- activating the card through a personal digital assistant;
- activating the card through a handheld computing device;
- activating the card by a representative of the vendor;
- activating the card by a manufacturer;
- activating the card by a patient;
- activating the card by a computer or automated system; and,
- activating the card by a health care professional or aide.

32. The method of claim 14, further comprising a user option to add more reminders to the card, the method comprising at least one of the steps of:

- charging the new reminders to a payment method already on file;
- charging the new reminders to a new payment method;
- transferring money from an account;
- billing to the patient; and,
- billing to a third party.

33. The method of claim 14, further comprising at least one of the steps of:
- transmitting a refill message if a refillable prescription is about to expire;
 - offering to connect the patient directly to a pharmacy to refill a prescription if a refillable prescription is about to expire; and,
 - requesting the pharmacy to automatically refill the prescription if a refillable prescription is about to expire.
34. The method of claim 14, further comprising the step of offering a health tip, with an option to learn more by pressing a key on a phone.
35. The method of claim 14, further comprising the step of transmitting a sponsorship message, with an option to learn more by pressing a key on a phone.
36. The method of claim 14, further comprising the steps of:
- checking for harmful drug interactions; and,
 - sending a warning to the patient if a potentially harmful drug interaction is detected.
37. The method of claim 14, further comprising an auto-refill option that automatically adds additional reminders to the card when the card runs out of reminders.
38. The method of claim 14, further comprising at least one of the steps of:
- obtaining at least a partial payment from a sponsor who has prerecorded a

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message;

obtaining at least a partial payment from a sponsor who has a prerecorded message in which the user can press a key or keys to hear more information from the sponsor;

obtaining at least a partial payment from medical insurance;

obtaining at least a partial payment from a medical insurance company;

providing a message reminding the person to refill their prescription;

providing a message reminding the person to refill their prescription and connecting the patient directly to the pharmacy at which the prepaid reminders were purchased;

providing a message reminding the person to refill their prescription and connecting the patient to the sponsoring pharmacy;

providing a message reminding the person to refill their prescription, and connecting the patient to the sponsoring pharmacy with a promotional fee paid by the pharmacy;

charging per reminder;

charging per minute; and,

charging per prescription.

39. The method of claim 14, further comprising commercial alternatives for marketing the prepaid telecommunications access card comprising at least one of the steps of:

marketing the prepaid telecommunication card to a pharmacy;

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marketing the prepaid telecommunication card to a doctor;

marketing the prepaid telecommunication card to a doctor who recommends use of the card to a patient;

marketing the prepaid telecommunication card to a health care professional;

marketing the prepaid telecommunication card to a pharmaceutical distributor;

and

marketing the prepaid telecommunication card to a pharmaceutical company.

40. The method of claim 14, further comprising a method of identifying the patient comprising at least one of the steps of:

requesting a security confirmation to verify whether the person who picks up the phone is actually the patient by asking for a secret piece of information; and,

requesting a security confirmation to verify whether the person who picks up the phone is actually the patient, by analyzing the patient's voice.

41. The system of claim 14, wherein the step of transmitting the medical reminder message includes the step of transmitting a query message that inquires if the patient is ok.

42. A medical reminder system comprising prepaid personal information number (PIN) that activates a medical compliance reminder system.

43. A prepaid telecommunication access card, comprising:

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a laminar card; and,
 a prepaid personal information number (PIN) that activates a medical compliance reminder system.

44. The system of claim 43, wherein the prepaid personal information number (PIN) is hidden under a scratch-off coating.

45. A medicine container comprised of:
 a container; and,
 a prepaid personal information number (PIN) that activates a medical compliance reminder system.

46. A patient medical compliance reminder system, comprising:
 a prepaid telecommunication access card having an identifier printed thereon;
 a medical compliance reminder system having an automated telephone function,
 an accounting function, and a patient profile/reminder function;
 wherein the automated telephone function is adapted to receive the card identifier via a telephone call placed thereto by the patient;
 the accounting function is responsive to the card identifier received by the automated telephone function for activating an authorization of a corresponding level of medical reminder services;
 the patient profile/reminder function provides a schedule for the medical reminder services; and

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47. The system of claim 46, wherein:

48. The system of claim 46, wherein:

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